cipal agent who is a licence holders. But there are complaints of thot nature. I am sorry, I do not have the figures for the last ten years. I will collect them and pass them on to the honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. J. S. Raju.

SHRI J. SRAJU: Sir, because of the Hawala agents, workers are cheated and the Government is losing foreign exchange also. So, is there any proposal with the Government under consideration to deal with the foreign governments to send some part of the wages of the workers directly to their nominees in India?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, I could not reolly follow his question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raju, can you kindly repeat your question?

SHRI J. S. RAJU: Yes, Sir. Because of the hawala agents, the workers are cheated and the Government is losing foreign exchange also. So, I would like to know whether there is any proprosal with the Government under consideration to deal with the foreign Governments to send some part of the wages of the workers directly to their7 nominess in India.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, we do have bilateral agreements entered into India with the State of Qatar and the State of Jordan and we are trying to enter into bilateral agreements with more countries because that may be a much better way of operating the manpower export to various countries. Now, as far as the question of foreign exchange is concerned, foreign exchange does come into this country. In fact, I was trying to know today what the extent of foreign exchange is which is coming in from these workers. But, unfortunately, the Reserve Bank of India does not keep accounts of those who are remitting below ten thousand rupees and most of our workers are remitting below ten thousands rupees and they put it in an account called the "Invisible Account". I do not have the exact figures with me now. But the figure for 1989-90 relating to this Invisible Account is Rs. 10,484 crores and I am sure that during the last two or three years, especially after the announcement of the New Economic Policy, the foreign exchange earnings must be higher than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Question No. 2.

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के संबंध में नीति

2. श्री राम जेठमलानी :
श्री सुरेश पचौरी

क्या नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि वर्तमान सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में व्यापक सुधार हेतु सुझाव देने के लिए सरकार द्वारा एक पैनल का संगठन किया गया है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या इस पैनल ने सरकार को अपना प्रतिवेदन दे दिया है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो प्रतिवेदन का ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(घ) सरकार द्वारा इस प्रतिवेदन के आधार पर क्या कार्य योजना बनाई गई है ; और

(ङ) यदि नहीं, तो इसमें विलम्ब के क्या कारण हैं ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) A Committee has been constituted to make recommendations fir a National Policy on PDS, which would focus on the need to allocate larger and more meaningful quantities to the needy and deserving sections of society.

---

*सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री राम जेठमलानी द्वारा पूछा गया ।

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) The Committee has been given time till 30th July, 1993 for submission of its report. The report of the Committee is awaited.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, as you will see, the answer is incomplete. For example, it does not deal with part (d) of my question at all. On 31st March this year, the Advisory Council on Public Distribution System required the Report to be furinshed by the 30th of April. Now, the Report was not furnished. Then they postponed it to June. The June newspapers said that it was being postponed again. Now, Sir, the Minister very solemnly tells us that it has been postponed to the 30th July!

If it has been postponed to the 30th of July, I have asked fod the reasons. Please tell us what the reasons are for this delay. Not one reasons has been given as if I have not asked that question! Sir, this is not my supplementary at all. This is really an effort to make the answer to my question complete. What is his answer to sub-clause (e) of my question? What are the reasons? Why is this Report which was expected in April not going to be made till the 30th of July?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just wait. The Minister is answering.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, he is blushing like a maiden. Let him answer anyhow.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K. ANTONY): Please wait. Have some patience. I have the answer. As the subject is very important for the whole of the country, the Committee thought that it should not rush things. The Committee felt that before finalising the Report, they should have extensive deliberations with all the State Governments and they also thought that they must have detailed discussions with all the political parties. So, the Committee had detailed discussions with the State Governments. The Committee had meetings at Bangalore, Guwahati, Delhi and Calcutta. And they had discussions with the State Governments on various aspects. Then the Committee had detailed discussions with many of our political parties, and they have almost finalised the report. Since it took a lot of time to discuss in detail with the State Governments, this delay took place. And I am sure that they will be able to submit the report very soon.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Now, Sir, my first supplementary. He has only completed the answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I agree.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, my first supplementary is... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: This issue was not answered in the Question. So, I agreed.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, without the report having been received or considered or without any changes having been introduced into the public distribution system, since March, every singls newspaer is publishing interested leaks, and the public distribution system is being now described as a revamped public distribution system in which it is said that 2.36 million ration cards have been issued . But the amount of foodgrains which is now made available to this new areas which is sought to be shpplied witr your supplies is only 2 million tonnes. In other words, the calculations show that you are going ti give a few grams to the poor people those areas, and you are calling this a wholly revamped public distribution system. Now I want to ask: Have you suggested to the Committee or is your Government considering a proposal that the rich people should not have any ration cards, those who earn crores or those who earn above a particular figure should be denied the ration cards?

AN HON. MEMBER: Above one crore.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Yes, at least, one crore. People who deal in crores at least should not be allowed to have a ration card because, otherwise, you are only going to give a few grams to every poor man about whom you are talking so much. Is there any such proposal under consideration to limit the issue of ration cards only to the deserving and the needy so that some substantial increase in their daily intake is provided? Have you got this in mind?

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Denying facilities to only one person who deals in crores will not substantially help the lot of the people. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister answer.

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: First of all...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member please sit down? The Minister is answering.

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: With all respect to the hon. Member, I would like to inform the House and also the hon. Member that the hon. Member is mistaken about the revamped system. The revamped public distribution system is already here. From 1st January, 1992 onwards, we have a system of revamped PDS in the tribal areas of the country. In the revamped areas—more than 1750 blocks are selected after discussions with the State Governments—apart from the PDS articles, they are also getting an additional quantity of 2 million tonnes. This is an addition. And this revamped system is already there. The Committee is not for improving the revamped system. The Committee is to improve the entire public distribution system. Without getting the report, I do not want to say anything about excluding anybody from the system. But already in some States like Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat, some sections are excluded. In Haryana, for example, all the MLAs are excluded from the benefits of PDS. Income-tax payees are also excluded. But, at the moment, as far as the Central Government is concerned, we have an open mind. We are awaiting the report of the Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, it is said that the original cost of the subsidy was about Rs. 2,500 cdores. And due to this so-called revamping which has or has not taken place—this we will decide after we see the report—the expected cost is now trebled, and the subsidy is going to be of the order of Rs. Rs. 7,500 crores. With the new allergy of the Finance Ministry to these subsidies, I want to know whether there is any coordination between your Ministry and the Ministry of Finance. Have you been able to consider whether you are in a position to provide this increased subsidy of Rs. 7500 crores when you have difficulty to provide Rs: 2500 crore Is't there a total lack of coordination when the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: Sir, the Government is working as a collective team and we know what is going on in other Ministries also. First of all, this year's estimated food subsidy, as per this year's budget, is not Rs. 2500 crores; it is Rs. 3000 crores. With regard to the steep increase in the procurement price, as pointed out by the hon. Member, the subsidy element may go up. But the Government is not in a position to increase the subsidy to a large extent. We have to find some solution. At the same time, I would like to inform the House that the Government as a whole have no allergy to this subsidy. Food subsidy will have to continue. The Government is committed to provide protection to the poor people and the Government is committed to provide the minimum foodgrains at cheaper price to the common people. For that, we are now spending Rs 3000 crores, and if needed, we will increase it a little more. I don't think it is a waste. The Government has no allergy to food subsidy. This Government is committed to provide food subsidy and the PDS will continue as long as this Government is there.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: I hope the House will agree that as a maiden

reply, he has done well. We have to compliment him.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: I have to make a request to the hon. Minister that he should not disallow Mr. Jethmalani's clients in the revamped public distribution system.

श्री सुरेश पचौरी: माननीय सभापति जी, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की राष्ट्रीय नीति के लिए जो कमेटी का गठन किया गया है उसके बारे में यह जानना चाहता हूं कि उसमें कौन-कौन सदस्य हैं? दूसरे, निश्चित अवधि की बात जो मंत्री जी ने बताई है कि कमेटी अपनी रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करेगी तो उसके बाद रिपोर्ट पर कितने समय में और क्या-क्या कार्रवाई हो सकेगी? तीसरे, क्या इस कमेटी को पूर्व में ही सरकार के द्वारा कोई हिदायत दी गई कि हैडीकैप्ड, डाइवोर्स्ड लेजीज, विधवा महिलाय और हरिजन आदिवासियों के हितों की रक्षा हो यह समिति अपनी रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करे?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: Mr. Viswanathan, former Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Niren Dey from West Bengal and Mr. Mahendra Pratap Singh from Haryana are the members of the Committee. They were Ministers representing various States at that time. As soon as we get the Committee's report, we have already committed, we will place it before the PDS Advisory Council. After getting the advice from the Council, the Government will implement it. Regarding his question about giving directions to the Committee, the Government gave only one direction to the Committee that the Committee should after a careful study and deliberation, recommend to the Government ways and means to increase the quantities of the foodgrains to the really needy sections of the people. That is the only direction we have given to the Committee.

SHRI N. E BALARAM: Sir, the Minister in his reply said that the panel was set up to formulate a new policy for the public distribution system. The public distribution system has been working in the country for the last so many years, and we have a policy behind it. What was the need now to set up a panel to formulate the new policy for the public distribution system? What was the reason for setting up such a panel? Was there any complaint from the public about the functioning of the public distribution system? What was the main reason behind the setting up of this new panel?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: The decision to appoint a panel was not taken by the Government. It was taken by the P.D.S. Advisory Committee wherein representatives of the State Governments are there, apart from Members of Parliament and repdesentatives of various other secions. It was a unamimous decision by the P.D.S. Advisory Committee. The main reason for setting up this panel was that though we were spending thousands of crores by way of food subsidy and distributing 18-19 million tonnes of foodgrains, both rice and wheat, actually, it was meeting only 12 to 15 per cent of the requirements of the people. Therefore, in order to increase the availability, at least, for the needy people—this fulfihment of 12 to 15 per cent of the requirements of the people will not help the common people—that this decision to set up the panel was taken.

SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a good thing that this panel has been constituted and their report is awaited. But in the meantime, the poor consumers are suffering a lot. The rice and wheat procured from Punjab are of the highest quality, but when it comes to the distribution centres, when it is distributed through the public distribution system, the consumers find that the supply made is not fit for human consumption at all. They do not ask for rice. They do not ask for wheat. They do not ask for certain other commodities. They ask only for sugar. Now, things have come to such a pass. May I know from

the hon. Minister what action is being taken against those corrupt persons who are maligning this very public distribution system? May I know how many prosecutions have been launched and how many persons have been sentenced for supplying commodities which are not fit for human consumption at all?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: Sir, the public distribution system is a joint operation of the Centre and the State Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and distribution of wheat, rice, sugar, kerosene and soft coke. After the allotment is made to the State Governments, the implementation responsibility is with the State Governments. Repeatedly, the Central Government has been requesting the State Governments to take more care so that we can prevent the diversion of P.D.S. articles as well as the mixing of bad quality with good quality. At the moment, I do not have...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The supply coming from the public distribution system itself is defective. That was the point made by the hon. Member. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: There is a safeguard. We distribute the foodgrains to the State Governments. If the State Governments feel that the quality is bad, they have every right to reject the supply. That is the arrangment. If the State Governments were to reject the supply, the Food Corporation of India will make another allotment. At the moment, I do not have the figure regarding the prosecutions launched against individuals. I will collect the figure and send it to the hon. Member.

SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: At what point does adulteration take place? What steps are being taken to check this adulteration?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Sarla Maheshwari.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: The hon. Member did not get a reply to his question. (*Interruptions*)

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी : मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि क्या यह सच है कि कृषि मंत्रालय की तरफ से आपके पास कोई प्रस्ताव आया है जिसमें यह प्रस्तावित किया गया है कि सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली से मोटे अनाजों की आपूर्ति की जाय ? अगर आपके पास प्रस्ताव आया है तो उस प्रस्ताव के प्रति आपकी क्या प्रतिक्रिया है और अगर नहीं आया है तो भविष्य में अगर ऐसा प्रस्ताव आता है तो उसके प्रति आपका क्या प्रतिक्रिया है ?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: There is no proposal from the Agriculture Ministry that PDS should supply coarse grains only. Many people, including the Ministry of Agriculture, have suggested that in addition to other articles PDS should also sell more and more coarse grains, not coarse grains alone. That aspect we are examining and we are requesting the State Governments also to examine this point.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: I would like to know, what are the guidelines given by the Government of India to the Advisory Committee about giving its repotr on public distribution system? Part (b) of my question is whether the Government is going to ocnsider allotting fair proce shops or some such agency to the uneducated persons, especially in rural areas. Part (c) of my question is, what is the percentage of people below the poverty line who have not received ration cards? If the number of such persons who have not received the ration cards is large, what steps is the Government going to take to provide ration cards to the people below the poverty line?

These are my questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: These are your questions. Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: We have given only one guideline to the Committee and that is: to recommend ways and means to increase the quantity of foodgrains to the really needy people of this country. Regarding allotment of fair price shops under the PDS; the Advisory Committee recommended that in future while allotting fair price shops women and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should get priority. That is the decision. At present the PDS is universal. Everybody is entitled to get a ration card. But there are complaints from many people. Every now and then we are examining. If we see that really needy people are not getting rations, we are taking steps to correct the situation.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: What about people below poverty line?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has anwsered that. Next Question.

Supply of substandard foodgarins under PDS

*3. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:†

SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether various State Governments have been complaining about the poor quality of foodgrains supplied to them under the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry into the supply of poor quality of foodgrains to the States has been made by Government; and

(d) if so, what is the outcome thereof stating the measures taken by Government to ensure the supply of good quality of foodgrains to the States under PDS?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table at the house.

Statement

The Central Government issues rice and wheat conforming to specifications prescribed by the Government to State Governments and U.T. Administrations ofr the Public Distribution System (PDS). They are provided opportunity for inspection of stocks before actual delivery, and may reject such stocks as do not conform to the prescribed quality standards.

Though several State Governments have been voicing a general concern about the quality of foodgrains at various meetings, no major complaints regarding bad quality of rice or wheat distdibuted through the Public Distribution System have been received by the Central Government from the State Governments/U.T. Administrations.

During April, 1992 to March, 1993, a total quantity of 72.2 lakh tonnes of wheat and 91.6 lakh tonnes of rice have been distributed to the States/U.Ts. for PDS. In a vast operation of this magnitude a few shortcomings cannot be ruled out altogether. However, the Central Government has requested the State Governments/UT Administrations to tighen supervision to ensure proper functoning of the PDS. State Governments/UT Administrations have been requested to set up village/Fair Price Shop level Vigilance Committees of consumers for this purpose. They also take action under the Essential Commodities Act to check malpractices.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Sir, the Minister in his reply has

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Satya Prakash Malaviya.